

Dogsthorpe Infant School

Central Avenue, Dogsthorpe, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire PE1 4LH

Inspection dates 24–25 February 2016

Overall effectiveness **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Dogsthorpe Infant School has improved rapidly since the previous inspection because all staff have worked effectively as a team to provide a higher-quality education for pupils.
- School leaders, including governors, know their school very well. They have effectively focused their efforts and energy in the most important areas, especially improving the quality of teaching and rate of pupils' progress.
- Teaching is good. Pupils make good progress, often from low starting points. Teachers regularly check pupils' progress and any who struggle receive extra, good-quality help so they catch up.
- Year teams are effective. Each teacher's expertise is shared to the benefit of all pupils.
- The curriculum is well planned with an interesting range of topics that engage pupils' interest.
- Staff have established a very positive ethos in which pupils feel valued and have the confidence to achieve. This is the basis of pupils' good academic progress and personal development.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They understand and practise the 'shine' values in all aspects of school life. As a result, pupils thrive in the happy and purposeful environment.
- Staff ensure that all pupils are safe and well cared for. Pupils say they feel safe in school.
- Children get a good start in early years. They progress well, rapidly developing confidence and independence. They enter Year 1 with many of the skills they need to be successful learners.
- Partnership with parents is very strong. Parents are positive about the improvements made.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Tasks, particularly in mathematics, are not always difficult enough to challenge the most-able pupils.
- Some teachers do not give pupils sufficient opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills to solve problems.
- The outcomes of subjects, other than English and mathematics, are not as strictly monitored.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - pitching work for the most-able pupils at the correct level of difficulty, particularly in mathematics
 - ensuring that all teachers provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to solve mathematical problems.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that leaders of all the subjects in the school's curriculum check the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in their subjects, and drive forward any necessary improvements.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- All staff share the school's vision, ably established by the headteacher, other school leaders and governing body. Together they have successfully tackled the areas for improvement outlined in the previous inspection report. All staff responding to the questionnaire agree they know the goals the school aims to achieve.
- The strong ethos, clearly embedded in the school values, is the foundation on which important improvements are built. Every aspect of school life embodies the ambition to 'Dream. Believe. Shine'. Pupils' personal development benefits particularly.
- Senior leaders and governors regularly monitor the work of the school. They use this information to evaluate what needs changing and make the improvements essential to move the school forward. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.
- The school development plan is used effectively by all staff to drive improvement. It is regularly referred to, discussed and required changes implemented consistently for immediate impact.
- Leaders' clear arrangements for checking on the quality of teaching accurately identify how teaching can improve. Staff benefit from training which is closely matched to each individual's needs. Governors' and leaders' effective use of rigorous performance management drives many important improvements.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher form a very effective team with complementary skills. Year group leaders successfully lead improvements and innovations, and ensure consistency within their teams.
- Skilled English and mathematics subject leaders use their good knowledge and understanding to positive effect. As a result, pupils' progress in these subjects has improved. Leadership of most other subjects, however, is less effective. Although these subject leaders display good levels of competence in their subjects, they have had limited opportunities to impact on their particular subjects.
- Staff make a strong contribution to the wider life of the school. They work closely together and parents say the school is at the heart of its community.
- The curriculum is well planned, year group teams sharing expertise to the benefit of all. Staff recognised that boys did not achieve as well as girls, and planned interesting and exciting topics that would appeal more to boys without losing the interest of girls. Music is a particular strength. Visits and visitors help deepen pupils' understanding of the subjects they are studying. The level of pupil participation in clubs is good.
- Pupils' preparation for life in modern Britain is good because values such as 'tolerance' are taught, practised and celebrated in the daily life of the school. Pupils' opinions are sought. They know the headteacher and staff reflect on what they say before making decisions.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted in the curriculum. Assemblies are regarded as very special times when the school community comes together, often to celebrate each other's achievements.
- Leaders effectively target the use of the pupil premium funding (additional government funding) where it is most needed. Extra high-quality help promotes the academic achievement of these pupils. Funding also ensures that no pupil misses out on wider opportunities.
- The primary schools sports funding is used effectively, both to give pupils a wider range of experiences and to train staff. Pupils enjoy being active and understand the importance of physical activity to healthy living.
- The local authority supports the school very effectively. Staff and governors recognise the important part it has played in improving the school, particularly the quality of teaching.
- The school works effectively with other local schools. Pupils benefit from using facilities and equipment, such as musical instruments, at the adjacent academy. Secondary school pupils visit and read with those needing extra help. Staff share ideas, for example, about how they are using the new approach to assessment.

- The partnership with parents is strong. Parents say they like that the headteacher is in the playground each morning, ready and willing to listen to them. They say she always has the best interests of their children at heart, and staff closely follow her lead. The overwhelming majority of parents responding to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, would recommend the school to another parent.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Although many governors are relatively new, they have already formed a very effective team which benefits from a wide range of expertise and experience.
 - Governors work closely with the headteacher and staff to help maintain the rapid impetus of improvement and ensure that the school provides a good education for all pupils.
 - Checks on the progress of pupils are analysed very closely to ensure that pupils do well, and to question and challenge leaders if they do not.
 - Governors manage the performance of staff, including teachers, rigorously. Decisions and pay increases are based on a good range of evidence.
 - Thorough oversight of the school's finances, including the use of additional funding, helps ensure that the school achieves good value for money.
 - Under the excellent leadership of the Chair, a national leader in governance, the governing body is both efficient and effective. Governors are ambitious and aspirational, with a clear objective to provide high-quality education.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. A well-trained team of senior staff closely monitors the work of the school. They work closely with parents and outside agencies to benefit pupils. All staff know and understand the clear procedures to follow. Training in how to keep pupils safe is up to date. As a result, the school is a safe place for pupils and staff.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching is good overall. Information, such as the school's rigorous checks on teaching, regularly moderated by the local authority, shows that teaching has improved since the previous inspection.
- Teachers respond positively to advice. They are reflective. They form a very effective team and collaborate well, particularly in their year teams.
- Rules and routines for pupils' behaviour are clear. Pupils know what is expected of them. In the questionnaire, nearly all pupils stated that teachers ensure that behaviour in lessons is good.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge means they explain the learning clearly, generally make the content interesting and quickly address any misconceptions. Pupils' responses to the questionnaire confirm that teachers make sure all pupils understand what they teach and help them do their best.
- Classrooms are stimulating places of learning that encourage pupils to be inquisitive. They are attractive and inviting, and help to promote pupils' learning.
- Teaching assistants make an excellent contribution to learning. Every moment is used productively. They are well trained in the learning programmes they use to give struggling pupils extra help.
- Reading in general and phonics (letters and the sounds they make) in particular are taught well. This is due to well-structured training that enables staff to ensure that all components of phonics teaching are fully incorporated in their lessons.
- Writing is taught effectively. It is often linked with speaking and listening, as pupils re-tell aloud the stories they write. They add words and phrases, and further embellish their stories with expressive language as they draft and re-draft their ideas.
- Mathematics is generally taught well. Staff training is improving the teaching of problem solving, an issue raised in the last monitoring visit. However, pupils' workbooks show they have few opportunities in some classes to use and apply their knowledge to solve problems.
- Teachers make good use of their regular checks of pupils' understanding to inform their lesson planning.
- Teachers effectively meet the needs of most groups of pupils. They use distinctive teaching approaches to engage and support pupils well. However, the most-able pupils are not always challenged by the tasks they are given, particularly in mathematics.
- Pupils' workbooks are presented well because teachers have high and consistent expectations, and because pupils are proud of their work.

- Pupils' homework is well balanced to check that pupils more fully understand what they have learned in school. Where appropriate, teachers provide interesting activities that build on what pupils have already learned and extend their learning further.
- Parents responding to Parent View overwhelmingly agree that teachers communicate with them very effectively and that they are clear about their children's progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Nearly all parents responding to the online survey feel their children are happy in school and making good progress because they are well taught. Nine in 10 pupils responding to their online survey stated that they enjoy school.
- Pupils fully understand the school's 'shine' values, because they are practised by everyone – staff and pupils alike – in every aspect of school life. They successfully promote aspiration and achievement for all pupils, and are fundamental to everything the school does. When acting as 'ambassadors' for each value, such as 'determination', pupils are recognised as good role models. They are proud when their photographs are displayed on the school's 'Shine Street'.
- Pupils' clear understanding of themselves as learners enables them to play a part in their own learning because they have a growing sense of how to be a successful learner.
- Pupils have a sense of democracy because of the roles they play in shaping their school, for example through the school council.
- Very suitable activities before school and at lunchtime promote good social skills to pupils struggling to build relationships.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school, a view shared by all parents responding to Parent View. Pupils are confident that adults in school will listen if they are worried. They say there is very little bullying, and that it is dealt with quickly. They know how to keep safe in a range of situations in their daily lives, including when using the internet.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In lessons, they pay attention and have a strong sense of right and wrong. Pupils understand and follow the school's 'behaviour recipe', and know the 'ingredients' and the reasons for them. Ninety per cent of parents responding to Parent View agreed that behaviour is good.
- Older pupils in Year 2 are proud to be members of the 'shine team'. After interviews and training, under the supervision of staff, they mediate between others and suggest helpful solutions that often resolve the conflict.
- As a result of the school's strong focus on tackling pupils' absence, attendance has improved and is similar to the national average for primary schools. Leaders' and governors' robust procedures are beginning to eliminate the small proportion of persistent absence.
- The small number of pupils who misbehave receive good support from staff and generally settle quickly. Staff also work closely with specialist agencies to provide additional support where needed.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils' achievement has improved since the previous inspection because of good teaching and more appropriate learning activities.
- In 2015, when compared with the national average, standards at the end of Year 2 were broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics, although the proportion going on to reach above-average standards, particularly in mathematics, was below that found nationally.
- The progress these pupils made in reading, writing and mathematics since starting Year 1 was good overall, although boys did less well than girls in mathematics.
- Phonics is taught well and pupils make good progress. School information and inspection evidence suggest that results this year will improve significantly from last year. This is because of effective staff training and more thorough teaching of all elements of phonics.

- While the quality of teaching is good, it has not been consistent over time, and this means some pupils having to make up lost ground. Current Year 2 pupils, for example, are making good progress now, but this has not always been so. Their starting points, at the beginning of Year 1, were relatively low.
- The school's checks on progress and the quality of work in pupils' books show that pupils currently in the school are making good progress overall and standards are rising. Year 1 teachers are building effectively on the good preparation in early years.
- Disadvantaged pupils make similarly good progress to their peers generally and, in Year 1, the faster progress necessary to begin to catch up. This is partly because the extra help they are given is matched very closely to their needs. Governors have made an impact, too, by making the progress of these pupils a particular focus, and checking very regularly.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability make good progress from their differing starting points. This is because extra help is closely tailored to their needs. Leaders and governors also hold teachers increasingly accountable for ensuring that these pupils do well.
- Pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress and achieve well. They quickly grasp the English language because of the good teaching and provision in class.
- The most-able pupils are not routinely set the harder work they need, particularly in mathematics, and teachers do not always recognise when they understand and are ready to move on. As a result, they typically make the expected rate of progress rather than the faster rate of which most are capable.
- In their personal development, attitudes to learning and improving outcomes pupils are increasingly well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Early years provision

is good

- Most children enter Reception with skills and knowledge below that expected for their age. In particular, many are relatively weak in the core skills of reading, writing and understanding of number.
- Children's progress in the Reception Year is at a very good pace and they are very well prepared to continue their learning in Year 1. Over the last three years, the proportion reaching a good level of development has increased year-on-year so that it is nearly at the national level. In particular, boys' achievement has increased and children eligible for free school meals are now ahead of their peers.
- Children respond very well to the high expectations of staff. Each activity planned will include an opportunity for children to decide if they want to challenge themselves further. Most do, because they want to do well and please staff.
- Children have a thirst for learning. Each morning they settle quickly to the interesting and varied activities they find waiting for them.
- Children's behaviour is good. They learn and play together well, share and take turns. They concentrate and persevere, even when activities are challenging. In assembly, behaviour is exemplary; children demonstrate curiosity, imagination and concentration. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong; their understanding of 'Shine' values is good; and in the story re-telling they show empathy for the main character and a clear understanding of 'perseverance'.
- Careful organisation of teaching and the well-planned curriculum promotes children's good achievement; each topic is relevant to the children and interesting. Well-established routines mean children quickly understand the structure of the day and expectations of them.
- Children achieve well because the planning of activities is based on clear and accurate assessments of each child's needs. As a result, all groups of children do well, including the most able. Every opportunity is taken by staff to promote children's speaking and listening skills. For example, children will explain today's tasks to the rest of the class, including the extra challenge. Phonics is taught well because staff insist on the correct pronunciation of sounds.
- Learning journeys show good progression from the start of the year. In a very wide range of activities, children are developing early reading, writing and number skills well. The partnership with parents is very positive, and parents like that the learning journals are available online.
- The setting is bright and stimulating, with numerous opportunities to support children's learning. Very good use is made of the outdoors to mirror and extend what is done inside.
- Teamwork among staff is very strong. Expertise is shared to the benefit of all children. As a result, provision across the classes is becoming more and more consistent.
- Transition to Year 1 has improved and is now good. In the past, Year 1 pupils have sometimes been

taken back to lower starting points, delaying their progress. This year, transition was better. Plans to ensure even better transition next year are already in place. For example, the reading specialist is working with those children struggling with reading to better prepare them.

- Leadership is very strong. Checks on children's progress are regularly used to adapt the action plan and re-shape the curriculum to build on strengths and fill any gaps. Staff are vigilant; Reception children are safe and very well cared for.

School details

Unique reference number	110719
Local authority	Peterborough City Council
Inspection number	10001883

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	267
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Hartropp
Headteacher	Rebecca Waters
Telephone number	01733 566 849
Website	www.dogsthorpeinfants.com
Email address	office@dogsthorpe-inf.peterborough.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	17–18 December 2013

Information about this school

- This school is an average-sized infant school.
- Each year group is taught in three classes.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is above average. The pupil premium is additional funding provided by the government to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after.
- Two in five pupils are from White British backgrounds. One fifth are from any other White background, and a similar proportion are of Pakistani heritage. Nearly half speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational or needs or disability is below average.
- A member of the governing body is a national leader in governance.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils' learning in all classrooms, some with the headteacher or other members of the leadership team. In addition, inspectors observed small groups of pupils being taught.
- The inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and listened to pupils read.
- The inspectors attended assemblies and observed pupils as they moved around the school.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other leaders, teachers and governors. The inspectors also spoke to a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors met with pupils to discuss their experiences at school.
- The views of 47 parents who responded to Parent View were taken into account. The inspectors also held informal discussions with parents. The inspectors also took account of the questionnaire responses from 32 staff and 75 pupils.
- The inspectors looked at a range of school documents and information, including the school development plan, checks on the quality of teaching, curriculum plans, minutes of meetings of the governing body, and pupils' behaviour and attendance records. The inspector also looked at arrangements and records for safeguarding procedures.

Inspection team

Robert Greatrex, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Anne Francis	Ofsted Inspector
Henry Weir	Ofsted Inspector

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